

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 IO-10 /047 W

----- 093051

R 300805Z JAN 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3218

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUANDA 0117

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: FNLA CLOSES DOWN THE OFFICIAL RADIO STATION AND BEATS
UP ITS DEPUTY DIRECTOR

1. LATE ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, HENDRIK VAAL NETO, THE HEAD OF
FNLA'S LUANDA BUREAU, ENTERED THE GOVERNMENT-RUN OFFICIAL
RADIO STATION AND DEMANDED THAT AN FNLA PREPARED PROGRAM BE
BROADCAST WITHOUT CENSORSHIP. THE STATION DIRECTOR REFUSED AND
VAAL NETO PERSONALLY DESTROYED SOME EQUIPMENT, INTERRUPTING
SERVICE FOR 30 MINUTES. ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 26 THE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE STATION WAS KIDNAPPED FROM HIS HOME BY FNLA.

2. BACKGROUND: EACH LIBERATION GROUP IS GIVEN 30 MINUTES EVERY
EVENING FOR A POLITICAL BROADCAST, AND THEY ARE SUPPOSEDLY FREE
TO SAY WHATEVER THEY PLEASE, SUBJECT ONLY TO EX-POST-FACTO
CENSORSHIP BY THE SECRETARY OF INFORMATION. IN PRACTICE, THE
FORMER SECRETARY OF INFORMATION AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE RADIO
STATION ARE PRO-MPLA AND SCREENED OUT OF FNLA AND UNITA'S
PROGRAMS ANY STATEMENTS THEY FELT WERE DEROGATORY TO THE
GOVERNMENT OR MPLA. VAAL NETO HAS FREQUENTLY PROTESTED THIS
CENSORSHIP. THE STATION HAS ALSO REGULARLY ATTACKED AND
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RIDICULED ZAIRE AND PRESIDENT MOBUTU, BRINGING PROTESTS FROM

THE ZAIRIAN CONSUL. NONE OF THESE PROTESTATIONS SEEMED TO HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE BIASED PROGRAMMING.

3. SINCE THE KIDNAPPING THE CITY HAS BEEN TENSE AND APPREHENSIVE, FEARING A DIRECT CLASH BETWEEN THE GROUPS. UNITA MOVED TO DEFUSE MATTERS BY PREVAILING UPON FNLA TO RELEASE THE KIDNAPPED OFFICIAL, WHICH FNLA DID ON JANUARY 26 AFTER BEATING HIM SEVERELY. BOTH MPLA AND FNLA HAVE ISSUED COMMUNIQUE ACCUSING THE OTHER OF TRYING TO CAUSE CIVIL WAR. THE LEADERSHIP OF BOTH FNLA AND MPLA ARE ACUTELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION AND THE PROSPECT THAT THE OTHER WILL GAIN TEMPORARY ADVANTAGES. VAAL NETO, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD US OF HIS FEAR THAT MPLA IS DISTRIBUTING ARMS TO UNTRAINED AND UNORGANIZED MASSES IN LUANDA. NETO TOLD ME ON JANUARY 28 THAT IF MPLA CONTINUES TO PROMOTE CHAOS FNLA MAY BE FORCED TO "ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY" FOR INTERNAL SECURITY FUNCTIONS. VAAL NETO DID NOT FORESEE CIVIL WAR, MERELY A NEED FOR FNLA TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER.

4. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE TENSION WILL CONTINUE UNTIL THE TRANSITIONAL

GOVERNMENT IS SWORN IN JANUARY 31. WILL ENSUE, A SHORT SPELL OF OUTWARD HARMONY AND BROTHERHOOD, BUT IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT BEFORE LONG THE BASIC RIFT BETWEEN MPLA AND FNLA WILL AGAIN BURST INTO THE OPEN. UNITA, AT THIS POINT, IS ALSO DEFINITELY HOSTILE TO MPLA, AT LEAST IN LUANDA.

KILLORAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, LIBERATION FRONTS, RADIO BROADCASTING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: johnsorg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00117
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750034-0359
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975017/aaaaafuc.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: johnsorg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by johnsorg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FNLA CLOSES DOWN THE OFFICIAL RADIO STATION AND BEATS UP ITS DEPUTY DIRECTOR
TAGS: PINS, ETEL, AO, FNLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006